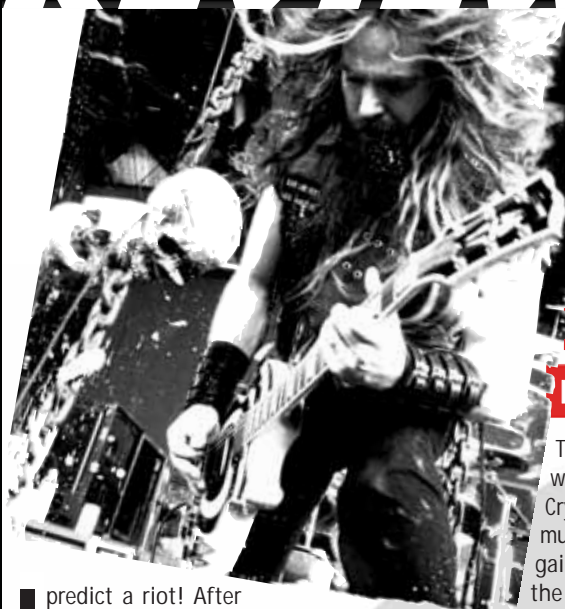


REVIEW

ZAKK WYLDE SIGNATURE CRYBABY WAH MXR OVERDRIVE PEDALS.....

This review is gonna be fun with a huge big capital 'F'! But is Gear's Tony Simmons butch enough to cope with two pedals from the meanest rock mutha around, guitar god Zakk Wylde? We're sure he's gone a bit pale....



I predict a riot! After all, in a humble reviewer's life, some of the products on offer definitely hit closer to the emotions and adrenaline 'on' switch than others, believe me. Thus (*Don't use words like 'thus' in front of Zakk. You'll get a slap - Ed*) when I was offered the chance to review the newest addition to the excellent line-up of wah pedals available from pedal maestros Jim Dunlop, the Zakk Wylde Signature Crybaby, it occurred to me that the equally Wylde-elicious MXR signature overdrive pedal hadn't ever graced the pages of Gear in a review format. What better than to tie up both these units in one review? OK? Lets's RAWK, people! (*That's better - image conscious Ed*).

SIGNATURE WAH

The toughest, meanest wah pedal on the planet....! Woo-hoo-that's how Dunlop describe the Zakk wah. Lift it out the box, take it out of the plastic, and you'll agree with that statement on looks alone. No conventional black finish casing here; Zakk's wah features a raw, burnished metal casing, with trademark Bullseye signature logo and 'Wylde Wah' embossed into the rib lines on the black footpedal rubber-very cool. The front announces the pedal as a 'Crybaby Wylde' and turning it upside down reveals another Bullseye/Crybaby Wylde logo, with a neat solid silver colour Zakk-and-guitar image - and a selected ZW discography! On perhaps a more practical note, the underplate also include Dunlop's newest 'thumb catch' plastic battery cover for insto battery changes - no small screws to fiddle about with between songs. That said, a wah isn't a particularly high-draw unit electronically, so battery changes won't happen too often. You can feed it with a 9v DC supply anyway. Other than that, guitar lead in one side, signal lead out the other, and GO!



IN USE

This isn't an all-singing, all-dancing wah like the awesome Dimebag Darrell Crybaby From Hell version, with multi 'Q' selection, stereo outs, gain boost and so on, but the Zakk's been well thought out with some neat features - for instance, it's got a tone-enhancing Fasel inductor, the type used in the original 1960's wah designs. Plus, there's a heavy-duty upgraded Dunlop Hotz Potz potentiometer for longer-lasting performance. The Zakk wah package also includes a long reach torque adjusting wrench, so's you can reach in under the rocker plate to adjust the resistance of the pedal.

Why? Well, guitarists are funny about things like that, plus you might want to stiffen up the movement to leave it in a fixed position on the sweep, for an additional tone effect.

'A real road-ready rock wah that's as tough as the guy whose name is on it'

And it sounds superb, with a very positive wah sweep action. On clean sounds it's good'n'funky, but in behind an overdrive or feeding a high-gain amp, it comes into its own with a chunky tone and real bite. Plus there's a transient 'Q' point in the travel, a tone step that's really aggressive-sounding. It's cool to hold it there for that juicy cocked-wah tone so beloved by rockers like Slash, who's a real Crybaby wah fan, Michael Schenker, and so on.

WAH CONCLUSION

A real road-ready rock wah that's as tough as the guy whose name is on it. Lots of top spec features and neat personal touches which I really like a lot - it's got Zakk's personality stamped all over it. But do those personal

touches consequently cost lotsa extra moolah? Well, the ZW-45 Zakk wah retails at an unbelievable £129...£20 cheaper than the Fasel-equipped Classic Crybaby, and only £19 more expensive than the regular non-Fasel Crybaby. And it doesn't just look 'rugged' - it looks absolutely un-bl••dy-breakable. Fantastic value - get one now!



MXR WYLDE OVERDRIVE

Again, pedal identity isn't a problem! The same 'standard' casing size as other MXR pedals, like the Phase 90, Micro Amp, Distortion+, etc., and there's that black Zakk Bullseye design on the cream colour casing. Big stomp button, LED to show effect in use and just three rotaries for Output, Drive and Tone. It's then a case of upping the gain, dropping the volume for raging attack with lots of sustaining harmonics, or backing off the gain with more volume for rhythm crunch - and all points in between. This isn't a mega-high gain pedal (as you might have expected), in fact it's much more versatile than that. I particularly like the way it lifted a clean guitar sound into solid 'crunch' mode, for instance. And though it's a signature pedal, it's the cheapest pedal in the MXR range at £99 RRP!

MXR CONCLUSION

Like the Zakkster himself, these pedals are instantly identifiable. Zakk's one of the highest-profile, no-b•llsh•t, hardest working 'old school' rock guitarists around these days. That's 'old school' in that he really works at what he does, and can play the sh•t out of his guitar and effects/amp set-up. Both these pedals are absolute stalwarts in any hard rock guitarist's pedalboard too, so they're not a frivolous purchase by any means. And, though you don't have to buy both, boy, do they work well together. Get these, link 'em with a patch lead then plug your guitar in one end, and feed the other end into an amp set to LOUD, and you've got tone, baby - BIG tone. Brilliant. Big up for Zakk, Dunlop and MXR!